

PLEASE REVIEW THE TEST PROCESS ORIENTATION FIRST (as many questions are answered only in the orientation slides and notes). The questions listed here are the additional questions that were commonly asked by applicants in attendance at the session presented by Classified Testing on March 18th.

Q: Why does the Inspector exam not have an assessment center?

A: The structure of all HFD exams is based on the requirements of both Chapter 143 and the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Both dictate that the ONLY ranks to have both a written portion and an assessment center are the Captain and Senior Captain (Suppression) promotional processes.

Q: Will the questions be based ONLY per book in which a different source may have a different answer even though it is the same topic/concept?

A: In order to move toward a more conceptual type exam, we try and make sure the questions are consistent across all source materials.

Q: Since the exams are moving in the direction of being more conceptual as opposed to just memorization, does that mean that the questions can be more subjective?

A: No. The questions do not have to be verbatim from the source material, but they do have to be based on factual information within the material.

Q. Based off of the study aide, do we have to read the chapters not referenced?

A. Per the Source Material Announcement, no chapters were omitted from the reading material. Even though a Chapter may not be directly referenced, material in every chapter usually refers or makes connections to those that are referenced. Authors usually write texts as a complete work and reading the complete source connects all the material together that the author wants to convey.

Q. How about formulas, equations, tables, figures, case studies, and stories in the source materials? Do we need to study or memorize these and will they be on the exam?

A. You do NOT need to memorize numbers or details from formulas, tables, figures, case studies, and stories. However, you do need to study these things and understand the concepts they are illustrating. A good rule of thumb is to think about how the information in a formula, figure, table, or story helps to do one of the Inspector tasks listed in the study aide we provided. That is the same way we think about writing exam questions.

Q. Why are the tests Classified Testing gives now so different from the tests that were given in the past?

A. Much like firefighting science and technology evolves and improves every day; the science of test design is also improving. Classified Testing is making changes to our test design to keep up with new best practices and to enable us to deliver World-Class, state-of-the-art testing services to the Houston Fire and Police departments for the City of Houston.

Q: Why did you make the study aide if we've never used one before?

A: The goal of Classified Testing is to improve our service to the City of Houston, to become more state of the art, more transparent, and to make things easier for the test-takers. The Study Aide contributes to that goal.

Q. Are all of the 100 questions on the exam going to come from the top tasks listed on the study aide?

A. Yes. Those tasks help us write questions that are as job relevant as we can make them, so we stick to those most important tasks.

Q. Are the item/ question reviewers HFD?

A. Yes.

Q: If most of the test is based on comprehension and application, but the questions won't be verbatim, how do we interpret information and facts from the books? Do the authors' opinions count as fact?

A: The authors' opinions still do not count as fact, and you will not be expected to know what the author believes. If the book gives a definition or refers to technical details, take that as a testable fact. If a book repeatedly states something is specific, a must or a best practice common to many departments, take that as a testable fact. Remember, the test is conceptual and based on using and putting together important facts at the same level of thinking you would do on the job as a Chief Inspector. The important thing is to be able to put together sets of facts from a source material to answer a question.

Q. Any extra study tips not mentioned in the orientation?

A. Our test guide, distributed with your guidelines for this exam (from the quartermaster), contains some more study tips. Additionally, SQ3R works well for many students (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SQ3R>). Research on learning also shows that study in small, frequent chunks (like 45 minutes six to eight times a day) over a longer period (like 90 days) leads to more knowledge retention and higher test scores for most adults. It turns out good sleep is also really important for allowing your brain to clean out the mental junk and solidify everything you studied. Getting 8 hours of sleep on average at the same time each day (like 10pm to 6am) accelerates learning rates.

Q. Compare to past promotional tests for HFD, will this test be more difficult?

A. In general, our tests are becoming more and more job relevant. This means there is less focus on memorization, and more focus on applying information practical to the job to answering questions similar to the question you will have to answer on the job in that rank in order to do those most important tasks well. For many folks, this will make the test easier, but for some applicants who have relied on superior memory skills to do well on past tests; this might seem harder at first.